Russia

In September, Russia held its largest military exercise since 1981, the height of the Cold War, deploying 300 000 troops and also inviting Chinese forces to participate. The event highlighted Russia’s growing assertiveness in security and foreign policy, following its annexation of Crimea and military intervention in Syria. The policies of President Vladimir Putin, who was re-elected earlier this year, pose a dilemma for the European Union and the United States, with some observers accusing him of trying to sabotage Western liberal democracy and others saying that he wants to regain the position of global player that the Soviet Union once occupied.

This note offers links to commentaries and studies by major international think tanks, which discuss Russia's policies and how to respond to them. More reports on the topic can be found in a previous edition of 'What Think Tanks are Thinking', published in March 2018. Some more papers on US-Russian relations are available in another edition from the series published in August 2018.

Security and foreign policy

Huge military drills show both the limits and the durability of China-Russia ties
Rand Corporation, September 2018

Putin is sneaking up on Europe from the south
Council on Foreign Relations, September 2018

Tensions en mer d’Azov
Groupe de Recherche et d’Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité, September 2018

Russia and the Baltics: A testing ground for NATO–EU defence cooperation
Istituto Affari Internazionali, September 2018

Japan-Russia relations: The Kremlin has the upper hand
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, September 2018

Russia-Israel relationship transformed by Syria conflict
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, September 2018

Antagonisms in the EU’s neighbourhood
Bertelsmann Foundation, August 2018

Retour de la Russie en RCA : Entre multiples intérêts et lutte d’influence
Groupe de Recherche et d’Information sur la Paix et la Sécurité, August 2018

Status stalemate in the Caucasus
Carnegie Europe, August 2018

EPRS | European Parliamentary Research Service
Author: Marcin Grajewski, Strategy and Coordination Unit
Did Russia really dump its U.S. debt?
Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

Russia’s Arctic illusions
Brookings Institution, August 2018

Walking a fine line on Russian sanctions
Rand Corporation, August 2018

China and Russia in global governance: Long-term obstacles to cooperation
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, August 2018

10 years after Bucharest: Why NATO should double-down on Georgian membership
European Policy Studies, July 2018

The US-Europe vs. Russia triangle
Istituto Affari Internazionali, July 2018

At Helsinki Summit, Trump and Putin become partners in destruction
Chatham House, July 2018

NATO needs a strategy for countering Russia in the Arctic and the Black Sea
Chatham House, July 2018

Trump’s attitude toward NATO makes Putin’s job easier
Carnegie Europe, July 2018

Re-establishing Reality in U.S.–Russia Relations after Helsinki
German Marshall Fund, July 2018

Russia’s return to the Middle East: building sandcastles?
European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, July 2018

No end in sight in Eastern Ukraine
Carnegie Europe, July 2018

EU-Russia relations in the new Putin era
International Centre for Defence and Security

Prospects for ‘Lisbon to Vladivostok’: Limited by a double asymmetry of interests
Centre for European Policy Studies, June 2018

The US and the EU need a stronger dialogue on Russia sanctions
European Policy Studies, June 2018

Russia’s role on North Korea: More important than you might think
Council on Foreign Relations, June 2018

Russia’s new state armament programme: Implications for the Russian armed forces and military capabilities to 2027
Chatham House, June 2018

Rethinking the regional order for post-Soviet Europe and Eurasia
Rand Corporation, June 2018

Winning the normative war with Russia: An EU-Russia power audit
European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2018
Russia’s active measures architecture: Task and purpose
German Marshall Fund, June 2018

Chechnya’s status within the Russian Federation
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, May 2018

Who's afraid of Russian gas? Bridging the transatlantic divide
Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 2018

Regional security in northeast Asia and the Russia–Japan–U.S. triangle
Russian International Affairs Council, May 2018

Hybrid conflict: The roles of Russia, North Korea and China
Clingendael, May 2018

Russia’s Afghan policy in the regional and Russia-West contexts
Institut français des relations internationales, May 2018

Do the Western Balkans face a coming Russian storm?
European Council on Foreign Relations, May 2018

Russia as restraining factor in the Iranian-Israeli confrontation in Syria
Institute for National Security Studies, May 2018

EU-Russia: Specific co-operations or global partnership?
Institut Thomas More, April 2018

From Chechnya to Syria: The evolution of Russia’s counter-terrorist policy
Institut français des relations internationales, April 2018

The Russian challenge
Rand Europe, April 2018

A test of strength: The escalation of the crisis in Russian-American relations
Centre for Eastern Studies, April 2018

Germany’s Russia policy shows no signs of softening
Chatham House, April 2018

Filling the void: Why the EU must step up support for Russian civil society
Wilfried Martens Centre, April 2018

Control of the Syrian airspace: Russian geopolitical ambitions and air threat assessment
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, April 2018

New sanctions on Russia are not enough
Brookings Institution, March 2018

The challenges of Putin’s fourth (and last?) term
Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 2018

Towards Putin’s last presidency?
Istituto Affari Internazionali, March 2018

EU member states and Russia: National and European debates in an evolving international environment
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, March 2018
Putin and Russia's new nuclear weapons: Whoever dies with the most toys wins?
Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2018

Putinism: A praetorian system?
Institut français des relations internationales, March 2018

Does Europe have a Russia policy?
Carnegie Europe, March 2018

Anti-corruption et capitalisme de connivence en Russie
La Vie des Idées, March 2018

Contested space: Eastern Europe between Russia and the EU
Centre for European Reform, March 2018

The Russia file: Russia and the West in an unordered world
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Auswärtige Politik, Center for Transatlantic Relations, February 2018

The real and hidden costs of Russia’s foreign policy
European Union Institute for Strategic Studies, February 2018

Putin’s re-election

Putin 4.0: ‘If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, May 2018

Putin after Putin
Fundacion Real Instituto Elcano, April 2018

No shock in Russian election: But can Europe surprise Putin?
Centre for European Reform, March 2018

Putin and Russia in 2018–24: What next?
Chatham House, March 2018

Russia’s reform failures and Putin’s future challenges
Wiener Institut für Internationale Wirtschaftsvergleiche, March 2018

The arrival of post-Putin Russia
European Council on Foreign Relations, March 2018

Energy

Nord Stream 2: Is Germany ‘captive’ to Russian energy?
Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

Beyond Nord Stream 2: A look at Russia’s Turk Stream project
Bruegel, July 2018

Should Germany dump Nord Stream 2? Can it?
Carnegie Europe, June 2018

Nord Stream 2: Rule no more, but still divide
European Policy Centre, June 2018

From vassalisation to emancipation: The model of Ukrainian-Russian gas co-operation has been revised
Centre for Eastern Studies, March 2018
Cyber-security

Trump’s election meddling sanctions will not deter Russia
Atlantic Council, September 2018

Defining Russian election interference: An analysis of select 2014 to 2018 cyber enabled incidents
Atlantic Council, September 2018

How Ukraine’s government has struggled to adapt to Russia’s digital onslaught
Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

Russia wants a deal with the United States on cyber issues: Why does Washington keep saying no?
Council on Foreign Relations, August 2018

Here’s how Russia will try to interfere in the 2018 elections
Rand Corporation, August 2018

Russian election interference: Europe’s counter to fake news and cyber attacks
Carnegie Europe, May 2018

Russian social media influence: Understanding Russian propaganda in Eastern Europe
Rand Europe, April 2018

Mapping the links between Russian influence and media capture in Black Sea countries
Center for the Study of Democracy, April 2018

Domestic issues

Pension reform in Russia: A test of the regime’s resilience and citizens’ patience
Finnish Institute of International Affairs, September 2018

Kremlin launches risky pension reform
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, July 2018

How Russian society created Putin
German Marshall Fund, June 2018

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